

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application in light of the amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1 - 7 and 9-11 are presently pending, with claim 8 having previously been canceled. Claims 1 - 7 and 9 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, claim 10 is amended, and new claims 12 and 13 are added. No new matter is introduced.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claim 10 is objected to as being dependent on rejected base claim 1, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. Applicants amend claim 10 accordingly, and respectfully submit that amended independent claim 10 stands in condition for allowance.

Objections to the Claims

Claim 1 is objected to for informalities. As claim 1 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, Applicants respectfully submit that the objection as to claim 1 is moot.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-6, 9 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent Publication No. JP 2001-99178 to Minamoto in view of Japanese Patent Publication No. JP 8-338440 to Ikeda. Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Minamoto in view of Ikeda and U.S. Patent No. 6,474,898 to Aota et al.

In the interests of prosecution efficiency, Applicants cancel claims 1 - 7 and 9 without prejudice or disclaimer, and respectfully submit therefore that the rejections as to claim 1 - 7 and 9

are moot. Applicants reserve full right to file one or more continuing applications based on one or more of canceled claims 1 - 9 at a later date.

Claim 11 depends from allowable independent claim 10. Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claim 11 is also allowable for at least this reason.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim -11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

New Claims

Applicants add new claims 12 and 13, which reapply the limitations of canceled claims 4 and 6, respectively, and which depend from allowable independent claim 10. Applicants submit that new claims 12 and 13 are also allowable for at least this reason.

CONCLUSION

Each and every point raised in the Office Action dated May 30, 2008 has been addressed on the basis of the above amendments and remarks. In view of the foregoing it is believed that pending claims 10 - 13 are in condition for allowance and it is respectfully requested that the pending claims be allowed and the case passed to issue.

If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Dated: August 8, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

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